

RECKLESS RALPH'S

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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## FRANK LESLIES BOYS OF AMERICA

### Part Two

by W. M. Burns

Since writing Part One of this article I have been lucky enough to obtain a run of Frank Leslie's Boys of America from No. 23 to 45 inclusive, with the exception of No. 44 which I still need to complete my little run.

Now with this run of 23 issues, considering the fact that each issue ran to 64 triple column, fine print pages, you can easily see that I have a tremendous amount of reading matter there. As a matter of fact, some 1400 or more pages, minus advertising. Leslie never ran any sort of advertising in his papers, except brief ads on last page advertising only his other various story papers. And his ads combined never reached a full column.

The larger part of his advertising in Boys of America was done on the back cover of his finely colored wrapper (or should we say cover) of Boys of America.

Incidentally, I believe a colored cover, or wrapper, on a boys paper was a distinct innovation way back in the 70s. I know of no other publisher of that era doing likewise. Several of that era used tinted one color covers, but these Boys of America covers compare very favorably with the much later Street and Smith and Tousey colored cover novels.

In this run I now have complete a serial that I mentioned in Part One. It is "Dick Lightheart; or, The Scapegrace Among the Redskins." A very

long serial tale of 88 chapters, enough to make two of the extra long Wide Awake Library, in which the first "Lightheart" tales appeared over here.

You old timers will recall that Tousey published 6 "Lightheart" tales in his Wide Awake Library.

Last two being "Lightheart in London" and "Lightheart's Victory." This latter tale starts in where the "Victory" tale left off. Lightheart and his friend Messiter find themselves out of a job with the closing of the house where they had been working in the "London" and "Victory" tale.

They got a job to come to America and work with a gang of surveyors, then surveying the line of the Union Pacific Railroad. And there their adventures start in to continue for 88 chapters of thrilling adventure, illustrated with dozens of old wood-cut engravings. The story never reprinted in dime novel form in the U. S. to the best of my knowledge.

While on the matter of "Lighthearts" want to state that Leslie published several, if not all, of the earlier ones including the very first in his Boys of America and Boys and Girls Weekly.

Another Hemyng tale that I don't think ever was published over here in novel form, is, "The Boy in Blue; or, He Would be a Soldier."

While I have not as yet read this run of Boys of America I find several long serials with no authors name whatever given as author. Among these I suspect Hemyng as author, as they are along the lines of his favorite type of writing. Among these are "Frost, Fighting and Frolic; or, A Newfoundland Boy's School-days" and "Pat O'Connor's School-



days; or, The Boys of the Shannon."

A lot of other complete serials with no authors name given such as, "Joe the Call Boy; or, Life Before and Behind the Curtain," "The Four-Leaved Shamrock; or, Erin's Glory," "The Land of Crimson Snow; or, The Voyage of the Lucky Friday," plus others. And here's a few other complete serials with authors names appended. Figure them out for yourselves. Any or all of them could be Hemyng. You old timers will recall how the old-time publishers entered into a conspiracy with various authors to use pen names, sometimes several of them at one time. Beadle, Tousey, Street & Smith all did this. (For instance I have runs of Touseys Happy Days in which I am convinced that Daughtry was writing from 2 to 3 of the current 4 weekly serials in that paper under various pen names.) Here they are. "The Water Rat; or, Life Along the Docks" by Stanley McKenna, "Prince Marco; or, The Child Slave of the Arena" by S. A. M. "Florello; or, the Slaves of the Sapphire" by Frank Mercer, and "Solemn Silas; or, The Boy of Mystery" by Nathan D. Urner.

Before closing on serials want to tell of another long complete one in this run. It is Hemyng's "Left His Home; or, The Fortune and Misfortunes of a Runaway." A serial of 37 chapters. The title would keep most of you guessing, but here's the real "low down." It was the complete tale about "Rob Rollalong." Reprinted in Street and Smiths Bound-To-Win Library #153 and 160, under titles of "Rob Rollalong, Runaway" and "Rob Rollalong at Sea." Again reprinted in their Round the World Library in #42 and 43 under titles of "Rob Rollalong, Sailor" and "Rob Rollalong in the Wilds."

A good tale, and am glad to have it in one complete yarn with dozens of illustrations.

Frankly fellows, there's nothing like having a tale in the original as lots of you know. For instance compare Touseys Comic Library with his reprint library "Snaps." I have several of the original Comics that ran to double the length of the same story in Snaps. And you all know, the veriest tyro among us, how the reprint Westbury novels were condensed from the original Tousey tales. Nearly all

dime novel tales are the same way fellows, if reprinted from some earlier serial paper. I will give Tousey and Beadle credit however, to state that their earliest library reprints were almost word for word reprints of their serial tales. But both firms slipped badly in this respect, after one or two reprintings.

But coming back to Boys of America. Since starting this second part of this article I have located Nos. 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22 of Boys of America. If I succeed in getting them it will give me a nice run of 29 consecutive numbers. There are dozens upon dozens of fine short stories and fact articles in B. of A. all profusely illustrated. Tales of adventure in many lands including many old time tales of our own western prairies and indian fighting.

Before closing this little article I wish to comment a bit on the type of literature that made up Leslies Boys of America and also Leslies Boys and Girls Weekly. Now these papers were considered by most parents as model reading for their youngsters. In fact for many years Leslie enjoyed a high reputation as a publisher of good clean stories for the young, free from the "blood and thunder" element so often common in other papers for the young. Yet some of the tales in these papers contained plenty of "blood and thunder." "Jack Harkaway among the Brigands" is a good example of that. While in "The Scapegrace among the Redskins" is one episode of indian torture that is really blood curdling. As bad or worse than anything in indian torture ever published by Beadle, Munro or Tousey. And those of you that have read "Rob Rollalong" know that there is plenty of "blood and thunder" here also.

But all great reading, nevertheless.

## NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

We've just heard of the tragic death of James E. Casey, Hotel Howard, Fayette, Mo. He died April 25th, of a heart attack. He was a very enthusiastic collector of the old timers of the past century. His wife, Mrs. James E. Casey intends to continue with his collection. Jimmy has been a member of the Brotherhood since April, 1943. We had hardly got to know him,



and wish we could have known him better, God bless him. We all send our sympathy, Mrs. Casey.

Who wants Golden Days, ye editor has vols. 8 to 19 inc., at \$5 per vol., or all 12 vols. for \$50 pp. From 1886 up, fine condition, original publishers binding, or will trade for what have you that I can use.

David C. Adams says: Ralph F. Cummings deserves the appreciation and encouragement of every one interested in the best of all hobbies; the collecting and preservation of nickel and dime novels. It was just by chance that I learned of his little monthly magazine, Dime Novel Round Up, and since subscribing to it, can truthfully say that I have enjoyed every number. There is a wealth of delightful information in the fine articles about the literature of the good old days of our youth, and I have fairly reveled in reading an assortment of back numbers, which are just as timely today as when first published.

And through the Happy Hour Brotherhood, of which is really a worth while organization, as he is President, I have established a most satisfying correspondence with many kindred souls, throughout the United States, Canada and the British Commonwealth. I am aware that only thru such a much needed method as that provided by a published membership of those seriously interested in "dime novel" collecting, could these results have been attained so promptly, and without a great deal of wasted letter writing. I believe the number of members would soon pass the thousandth mark, if all those indulging in the commendable hobby of preserving the colorful thrillers of the "Elegant Eighties" and "Gay Nineties" knew of the information, advantages and opportunities now obtainable by members of the Happy Hours Brotherhood and readers of the official 'club' paper, "Dime Novel Round-Up." In addition to the many who have written me such cordial letters, and truly helped me secure certain items I could not have otherwise obtained, I wish to especially thank "Reckless Ralph" for his very cheerful neighborly letters and the surprise packages of fine novels, which sure brot back vivid memories of those "good old days"! More of Bro. Adams fine

letter in the next number.

Here are a few new novel articles that have appeared as follows: Lone Indian Mag, March 1944 "Birth of the Dime Novel," by Walter Pannell. Lewiston Evening Journal, April 17th 1944 "Collecting Fascinating Hobby," by Sam E. Conner, and Woonsocket Call, May 6th, 1944 "Pyramids 4 Dime Novels," by Eli A. Messier. All good write-ups.

What say fellows, what would be a good name instead of Happy Hours Brotherhood, as I've had several ask me, why, Happy Hours Brotherhood? We have the official magazine Dime Novel Round-Up, and Happy Hours I'm told sounds too sissy. What shall we name it, fellows? Think of a good name and send it in, pards.

Feller's, have you seen Charlie Bragin's "Thrills and Chills," yet, sure is a corker, and full of fine cuts of all kinds of novels too, a fine item for your collection, and ten times better than the other one. If you haven't already seen it, send a dollar to Charlie Bragin, 1525 W. 12th St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

## THE FORGOTTEN MEN OF THE HOUSE OF BEADLE

by Rev. Roland D. Sawyer

We have had many articles about the various writers of the old Beadle tales, we have had a full tribute to the various publishers, but there is one set of men, of great value in the old stories, of whom we have heard little.

And this forgotten group are the men who drew the pictures which appeared on the front out-side covers.

I don't know the name of a single one of those men, yet the pictures they drew helped make the story that followed popular or a failure.

Few of us lads had sufficient money to subscribe, or buy each week, the stories as they appeared. Rather we went into the shops, picked up a bundle, looked them thru, picked out one or two and left our nickles or dimes. And the moving feature that ruled our selection was the picture on the outside front cover. Some of those pictures were crude, but some were fine bits of work.

I recall one of especial appeal to me as a lad, it was "Fancy Frank of Colorado." No movie promoter, who gets



thousands where the old illustrator got dollars, has equalled picturing a hero so dashing and manly as was that hero of the Beadle "Half-Dime."

And some of those pictures that adorned the old-time sea stories of Col. Prentiss Ingraham, they were gems of work.

I wonder if someone can tell us who some of those craftsmen were.

### CIRCUS TOM WEEKLY

by Kenneth Daggett

Truly a real boys own weekly—

Designed and got up in whole by a schoolboy of fifteen years of age back in the novel days of 1910-11.

As a boy I loved my novels and some times I would walk for miles with a roll of these dime novels under my arm to trade with other lads in the country towns I lived in.

I also liked to write and to draw from the time I could hold a pencil in my fist.

Many were the numerous compositions I brought forth in English class in school and many were the drawings that my teachers hung on the schoolroom walls.

Incidentally there were times in the early grades when I had to stand in the corner for drawing pictures when I should have been studying my lessons.

I saw my first circus as a very young lad and it was 1910 before I saw another one and after that every thing I could get hold of on a circus was read over and over and soon our barn loft was full of swinging trapeezes, and horizontal bars and what not. The local blacksmith made me a set of rings, to swing on and many hours was spent in this loft and many tumblers taken into the hay.

What fun we had when some of the boys came down and we staged a

regular circus.

As I look back I can see what a lot of real building up such training gives one for I learned many tricks.

I am nearly fifty years old now but last year I could still walk all around on my hands and do head stands.

Could still jump to and fro over a twelve inch stick held in my hands and go up through my hands and over a bar from the back side.

In these early days of interest in the circus I wanted some circus stories. There were none in my novels. I was drawing circus pictures and before I knew it I was making this little weekly that I called Circus Tom.

The boys all liked them and many copies were made to trade. I continued to make them for a long time for my own amusement and when school again opened many were the plots and drawings that come to life behind my geography.

In these later days I still like to look at the covers and say "Not bad for a kid."

Now and then I will make copies for folks and novel collectors when I have the time.

I still have some of the old time thrillers and dig one out now and then and sometimes I say to myself Ken old boy. If you had been older then back in those novel days and used your talent then—for it looks so you had something there.

Who knows there would maybe have been some circus stories in weeklies published by Smith or Tousey under your name.

I buy and sell novels of all kinds and will give you a square deal. Where can I get some James Boys Weekly?

R. E. MORRIS

231 6th St., S. W., Mason City, Iowa

### PARTIAL LIST OF H. H. BRO. MEMBERS FOR 1944

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59. Capt. C. G. Mayo, S. C., U. S. N., 621 Pembroke St., Bryn Mawr, Pa.
101. Alan E. Schaeffer, 113 Cherry St., Myerstown, Pa.
109. C. E. Douglas, 402 Williams St., Vienna, W. Va.
130. Albert D. Stone, 88 Norfolk Ave., Swampscott, Mass.
149. Henry Stinemets, 223 W. 2nd St., Los Angeles, Calif.
180. Albert Pohlman, Route 1, Hortonville, Wisc. (new member)
181. Paul G. Welkey, 1703 Popular St., Philadelphia, Pa. (new member)
182. Pfc. Sam Tananbaum (31197609), 225th C. C. T. S. Sec. D. Box 1092, A. A. B., Rapid City, S. Dak. (new member)



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I will pay top prices for Tip Top in small or large lots. Can also use Beadle, Munro and Tousey novels; certain clothbound books by Rider Haggard, Gilbert Patten and Burt L. Standish; Merriwell stories in Medal Library, Merriwell Series, etc., and in Top Notch and other magazines.

Nothing bought or sold that is not in nice condition.

I answer all correspondence promptly.

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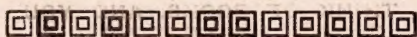
Little Rock, Ark.

Will give \$1.00 each for The Collectors Miscellany, pub. by Joseph Parks in 1932 to 1935. Nos. 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 25 to end.

Have bound volumes of Our Boys and Girls Monthly pub. by Tickner & Fields, also Oliver Optic's Boys and Girls. As they come, fair to fine condition, 50c per vol. Have 12 or 15 vols on hand, or all for \$6.00.

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Fisherville, Mass.



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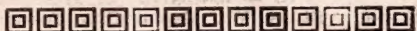
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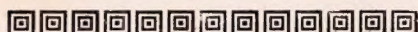
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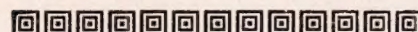
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